

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
نَحْمَدُهُ وَنُصَلِّی عَلَیْهِ وَسُلَّمَ

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## NOTES

### An Instance of Sciolism.

Science and religion have been admittedly the greatest benefactors of mankind. They have here and there seemed to conflict when one or other of them has transgressed the limits properly assigned to it or when one has assumed the prerogative of sitting in judgment on or denying or contradicting truths established by the other. If theologians have from time to time been so purblind as to pooh-pooh all that did not seem to fit in with their dogmatized system of theology, it must not be forgotten that scientists have been no less unwary; nay, have seldom, if ever, let slip an opportunity for criticizing the domain of religion. This more than occasional clash has given rise to the popular idea that science and religion can never agree, and that they must be in a perpetual state of warfare. We, for our part, have stoutly and consistently maintained that there is no clash between religion and science, provided, of course, that we do not understand by the word "religion," the belief in the doctrine of "perfect justification by the blood and righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ, the doctrines of the Fall, of the Atonement, and of eternal punishment; or subscription to the doctrines of the sacrifice of the Mass, Transubstantiation, priestly absolution, the adoration of

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the elements in the Lord's Supper, and Purgatory." It is to be earnestly desired that the Press, instead of taking notice of such things as throw into striking relief the idea that there does actually exist a clash between that which religion—the true religion—propounds and the conclusions of science, would devote the same amount of space to such facts as are likely to emphasize or corroborate and cement the idea that there is no essential discrepancy between the truths established by either of them.

Very often, in these pages, we have called attention to the attitude of the representatives or spokesmen of the Christian Church towards science. In this issue we record how that eminent physiologist, Sir Arthur Keith, who presided over the 1927 session of the British Association, has in the exuberance of his vast knowledge ventured to "rush in where angels fear to tread." Sir Arthur, in the course of an address on the Darwinian theory, delivered at Manchester University, said<sup>1</sup> :—

"Mind has a material basis. The brain is a piece of living machinery. It consumes fuel and transmutes energy into feeling, thought, and memory.

"Every fact known to medical men compels the inference that mind, spirit, soul are the manifestations of a living brain, just as the flame is the manifest spirit of a burning candle. At the moment of extinction both flame and spirit cease to have a separate existence. However much this mode of explaining man's mentality may run counter to long and deeply cherished beliefs, medical men cannot think otherwise if they are to believe the evidence of their senses."

This pronouncement clearly means that Sir Arthur Keith is opposed not only to every religious teacher and thinker but also to many of the great men of science. Conspicuous among the latter is Sir Oliver Lodge, a former president of the British Association, who is shortly issuing a book under the title *Why I Believe in a Personal Immortality*. Sir Oliver is reported to have given his views on Sir Arthur's opinions as follows<sup>2</sup> :—

"I am quite familiar with all that medical men and scientists have to say on the subject. It is a recognized view of physi-

<sup>1</sup> *Daily Express*, May 11, 1928.

<sup>2</sup> *Evening Standard*, May 10, 1928.

ologists that the spirit does not survive after the brain has ceased to function.

"They do not find any spirit in the brain by analyzing it, of course, and they have got a different opinion altogether from what I have on the function of the brain.

"I think the brain is an instrument used by the mind. They think the brain is the mind, apparently. Well, I do not look at it that way. It is all a question of whether the brain is an instrument or itself. The brain manifests the mind, but that is not the same thing as being the mind.

"A violin manifests Beethoven, but that is not quite the same thing as being Beethoven. I look at the brain like that. If you smash the instrument, of course, the mind cannot manifest itself.

"That is all right; what they know about the brain and the way it acts on muscles and nerves is all good. That is all part of the machinery. They know a terrible lot about the working of that machinery. But there is something more to be said than that. Anybody can point out how an automatic machine, such as the typewriter, works, and you cannot get the thing to go unless it is properly connected up and in good order. But that does not explain the sense or the meaning of what comes out of it.

"My point is that the brain or any form of matter cannot evolve Shakespeare, poetry, or sense, or meaning. It manifests it like a typewriter. They can easily explain the mechanism of a typewriter, or any other instrument. We do not differ about that aspect at all. It is only the other aspects which they have not attempted to understand that we agree to differ about.

"The way they work out the details is very good. If the brain is the mind, and one is destroyed, the other goes, too; but if it is only an instrument, and one smashes the instrument, such as a violin, it does not kill the music, the real thing behind the scenes. But the instrument can no longer manifest. It goes out of our ken—which is not by any means the same thing as going out of existence.

"They do not accept what evidence there is about the survival of the spirit. There certainly is some evidence, but

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they do not take the trouble to look at it from any other point of view, because they think the brain and mind are one and the same thing. It is nothing new to me. I am quite familiar with all they say on the subject."

In this connection it would be as well to glance back for a moment at the stages of mental transition through which Europe has been passing. It is but a few centuries ago that a belief in the existence of ghosts and apparitions formed one of the chief features of the mental structure of Europe. The burning of witches is fact, historically recorded, as lately as the eighteenth century. Then there came reaction, which took the form of absolute denial of everything not perceived by the physical eye. Then once again the pendulum was seen swinging towards the rehabilitation of the religious ideas; and this was in the beginning of the nineteenth century, when the movement of Spiritualism began to make itself felt. This movement preached that the soul survives its material frame. The result was that great scientific men not only proposed belief in the existence of the soul, but even went so far as to assert that the spirits of the departed could bring their influence to bear on those living on the physical planet by various means, one of which was automatic writing.

On the pronouncement of Sir Arthur Keith we have but one more criticism to offer. Sir Arthur, we believe, would be the first to admit that a great number of facts which are of capital importance remain unknown to medical science. Cannot the soul be one of them?

Sir Arthur, like many other scientists, when he dogmatizes, forgets that all human knowledge is only a little focus of light on an illimitable universe. Moreover, his pronouncements do not necessarily involve the untenability of what has been said at one time or another by Moses, Jesus and Muhammad, and other great religious personages about the immortality of the soul and the life after death. For negation of a theory is no theory. The experiences of the great religious sages as against the experiences of the physicists and physiologists who know nothing whatsoever of the spiritual world are, to say the least, deserving of the same consideration we accord to the views of the latter on scientific matters.

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We, in our everyday life, use a medicine on the advice of a friend, though we may have never tried that medicine, and our friend may be no qualified doctor. We take it simply because of our belief in the words of our friend and the experience based on the benefit which he may have derived from its use. Why should we not, then, in far greater degree, believe in what the prophets have said—prophets who are benefactors far dearer to us than any friends? The position of the religious sages is incalculably higher than that of any friend of ours or of any scientist. For it is the prophets of God who have moulded or changed the destinies of nations—a thing which has never fallen, and never will fall, to the lot of a scientist. It stands to reason, therefore, that we should attach greater importance and respect to their views on subjects with which they obviously are better acquainted than the scientist. We are constrained to say that Sir Arthur, with all due deference to his encyclopædic knowledge, has overstepped the province of the scientist. One wishes that the man of science had rather adopted the attitude of Muhammad, who, when his advice was sought on some mundane matter, replied: "You can manage your worldly affairs better. Come to me when you want my advice on some religious matter."

### **Islamic Conception of the Soul.**

#### *(a) Its Nature.*

In connection with the above,<sup>1</sup> we give below the Islamic viewpoint on the question. In the first place it must be understood that there exists a close and mysterious connection between our body and soul, and the solution of the mystery is beyond human comprehension. The relation between spiritual nature and physical nature of man becomes evident on a careful consideration of the actions of the outward organs and the effect they produce upon the internal nature of man. Weeping, for instance, even if artificial, at once saddens the heart, while an artificial laugh at once makes it cheerful.

According to the Qur-án the body itself is the mother of the soul. The soul does not come from without or from the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Mirzá Ghulám Ahmad, in his *Teachings of Islam* (London, 1910), pp. 8-13.

heavens and seek connection with the body in the womb of the mother, but it is a light that lies concealed in the seed and grows with the growth of the body. The Holy Word of God gives us to understand that the soul grows from the body while it is developed in the womb of the mother. Thus it says: "Then We bring the body which has been prepared in the womb into another form and manifest another creation out of it (which is called the soul), and blessed is God the most excellent Creator Who has no equal" (xxiii. 14). The words "We manifest another creation out of the same body" throw light on the nature of the soul and indicate the strong and inexplicable tie between it and the body. The hint which the Word of God has here given us as to the nature of the connection between the body and the soul leads us to other important conclusions. It teaches us that the words which a man speaks and the deeds which a man does, if said or done for the sake of God and to manifest His glory, and if regulated by His commands, are subject to the same Divine law, viz. that in all the sincere outward actions there is a soul hidden as in the seed of man, and as the body of these actions is gradually developed, the hidden soul appears in it. When the complete embodiment of the actions takes place, the soul flashes of a sudden in perfect brightness and glory and shows itself so far as the spirit can be seen and then appears a plain movement of life. The full development of the body of actions is followed by a blazing of the light within just like a flash of lightning. This stage is allegorically described in xv. 29 of the Holy Qur-án, which says: "When I have formed the body of it and set right all the manifestations of glory and breathed into it My soul, prostrate yourselves in obedience before it." This verse also suggests the same idea, viz. that in the complete embodiment of good actions the spirit within brightens up. This Almighty God describes as His own soul, thus indicating that it partakes of a Divine nature. For the body is fully developed only after the extinction of the physical desires, and therefore the Divine light, which before was dim, shines out in full lustre, and this makes it incumbent upon everybody to bow down before the manifestation of this glory. Therefore everyone is naturally attracted towards it, falls down

upon his face before it, except the spirit of evil which loves darkness.

The soul is a light which springs up from the body which is being prepared in the womb. By the springing of the soul we only mean that it is hidden and imperceptible although its germs are present in the seed itself and that, as the body is gradually developed, the soul grows along with it and becomes manifest. There is not the least doubt that the inexplicable connection with the seed is in accordance with the design of God and with His permission and will. It is a bright essence in the seed itself. It is not a part of it in the sense in which matter is part of matter, but at the same time it is untrue to say that it comes from outside or, as some wrongly imagine, falling upon the earth, is mixed with the substance of the seed. It is hidden in the seed as fire is latent in the flint. The Holy Word lends no support to the view that the soul comes from the heavens as something distinct from the body, or that it falls suddenly upon the earth and, mixing with the seed accidentally, finds an entrance into the womb. The soul is as surely a creation of God as anything else.

(b) Islam makes the life hereafter a continuation of the present one. Death is not an interruption but a connecting link, a door that opens upon the hidden realities of this life. Islam regards the state after death as image of the spiritual state in this life and teaches that the next life is a life of unlimited progress.

### The Christian Call to Prayers.

In the hustle and bustle of our daily life, the stress of routine seldom or never permits us to probe beneath the crust of the commonplace doings and events which have become part and parcel of our everyday existence; nay, we lose the habit of exercising our power of observation and thought on what has become to us, as it were, a sort of second nature. But if ever we do make an effort to break through the crust and to see what lies beneath it, we are apt to discover, to our amazement, facts which we never suspected. Take, for example, the Christian call to prayers. This is an institution to which not only Christians, but those also who are not Christians,

have become so thoroughly accustomed that no one feels the faintest curiosity as to its origin or significance—a phenomena we propose to consider in this short note.

We have very often dwelt on the various institutions of dogmatized Christianity, and pointed out that they are more or less an exact replica of pagan customs; that they are, in fact, pagan institutions in Christian clothing. The Virgin Birth, the Immaculate Conception, Easter, and Christmas, all are pagan in origin. Therefore our study of the Christian call to prayer will be amply repaid by a still clearer insight into the Christian system of theology.

Sir James George Frazer, an authority on anthropology, in discussing the institution of the bells in the churches and their wearing on the robes of the priest, is of opinion that they are, in their origin, means to frighten away the evil spirit, instruments which possess some magical power. We believe we cannot do better than quote the words of Sir James from his book *Folklore in the Old Testament* (London, 1919, vol. iii, pp. 446 *et seq.*) on the subject under consideration. We therefore step aside and let him speak for us:—

“In the Priestly Code it is ordained that the priest’s robe should be made all of violet, and that the skirts of it should be adorned with a fringe of pomegranates wrought of violet and purple and scarlet stuff, with a golden bell between each pair of pomegranates. This gorgeous robe the priest was to wear when he ministered in the sanctuary, and the golden bells were to be heard jingling both when he entered into the holy place and when he came forth, lest he should die.

“Why should the priest in his violet robe, with the fringe of gay pomegranates dangling at his heels, fear to die if the golden bells were not heard to jingle, both when he went into and when he came forth from the holy place? The most probable answer seems to be that the chiming of the holy bells was thought to drive far off the envious and wicked spirits who lurked about the door of the sanctuary, ready to pounce on and carry off the richly apparelled minister as he stepped across the threshold in the discharge of his sacred office. At least this view, which has found favour with some modern scholars, is strongly supported by analogy; for it has been a

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common opinion, from the days of antiquity downwards, that demons and ghosts can be put to flight by the sound of metals, whether it be the musical jingle of little bells, the deep-mouthed clangour of great bells, the shrill clash of cymbals, the booming of gongs, or the simple clink and clank of plates of bronze or iron knocked together or struck with hammers or sticks. Hence in rites of exorcism it has often been customary for the celebrant either to ring a bell which he holds in his hand, or to wear attached to some part of his person a whole nest of bells, which jingle at every movement he makes. Examples will serve to illustrate the antiquity and the wide diffusion of such beliefs and practices.

“Lucian tells that spectres fled at the sound of bronze and iron, and he contrasts the repulsion which the clang of these metals exerted on spirits with the attraction which the chink of silver money wielded over women of a certain class. At Rome, when the ghosts of the dead had paid their annual visit to the old home in the month of May, and had been entertained with a frugal repast of black beans, the householder used to show them the door, bidding them, ‘Ghosts of my fathers, go forth!’ and emphasizing his request or command by the clash of bronze. Nor did such notions as to the dislike which spirits entertain for the tinkle of metal expire with expiring paganism. They survived in full force under Christianity into the Middle Ages and long afterwards. The learned Christian scholiast, John Tztzēs, tells us that the clash of bronze was just as effective to ban apparitions as the barking of a dog, a proposition which few reasonable men will be inclined to dispute.

“But in Christian times, the sound deemed above all others abhorrent to the ears of fiends and goblins has been the sweet and solemn music of bells. The first Provincial Council of Cologne laid it down as an opinion of the fathers that at the sound of the bells summoning Christians to prayer demons are terrified and depart, and the spirits of the storm, the powers of the air, are laid low. However, the members of the Council themselves apparently inclined to attribute this happy result rather to the fervent intercession of the faithful than to the musical clangour of the bells. Again, the service book known

as the Roman Pontifical recognizes the virtue of a church bell, wherever its sound is heard, to drive far off the powers of evil, the gibbering and moving spectres of the dead, and all the spirits of the storm. A great canonist of the thirteenth century, Durandus, in his famous and popular treatise on the divine offices, tells us that 'bells are rung in procession, that demons may fear and flee.' For when they hear the trumpets of the church militant, that is, the bells, they are afraid, as any tyrant is afraid when he hears in his land the trumpets of a powerful king, his foe. And that, too, is the reason why, at the sight of a storm rising, the Church rings its bells, in order that the demons, hearing the trumpets of the eternal king, that is, the bells, may be terrified and flee away and abstain from stirring up the tempest."

Sir James George Frazer continues to say on pp. 454 *et seq.* as follows:—

"Throughout the Middle Ages, and down to modern times, the sound of church bells was also in great request for the purpose of routing witches and wizards, who gathered unseen in the air to play their wicked pranks on man and beast. There were certain days of the year which these witches set apart more particularly for their unhallowed assemblies or Sabbaths, as they were called, and on such days accordingly the church bells were especially rung, sometimes the whole night long, because it was under cover of darkness that witches and warlocks were busiest at their infernal tasks. For example, in France witches were thought to scour the air most particularly on the night of St. Agatha, the fifth of February; hence the bells of the parish churches used to be set ringing that night to drive them away, and the same custom is said to have been observed in some parts of Spain. Again, one of the most bewitching times of the whole year was Midsummer Eve; and accordingly at Rottenburg in Swabia the church bells rang all that night from nine o'clock till break of day while honest folk made fast their shutters, and stopped up even chinks and crannies, lest the dreadful beings should insinuate themselves into the houses. Other witches' Sabbaths used to be held at Twelfth Night and the famous Walpurgis Night, the eve of May Day, and on these days it used to be

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customary in various parts of Europe to expel the baleful, though invisible, crew by making a prodigious racket, to which the ringing of handbells and the cracking of whips contributed their share."

### **The Islamic Call to Prayers.**

Side by side with the Christian, it is but natural that we should place before our readers the Islamic Call to Prayers. This, when translated, would read: God is great, God is great, God is great; I bear witness that God is the only object worthy of worship, I bear witness that God is the only object worthy of worship, I bear witness that Muhammad is His Apostle, I bear witness that Muhammad is His Apostle. Come to prayers, come to prayers, hasten to success, hasten to success. God is great, God is great; there is no object worthy of worship but Allah.

The words are not only simple and grand, but they contain, too, a summing up of the whole teaching of Islam.

We have seen the origin of the Christian call to prayers—the bells. Let us therefore proceed to study the origin and meanings of the Islamic Call.

#### *(a) Its Origin.*

Every nation has adopted different methods for calling its people to the place of worship. Mostly this has been effected by the use of gongs or bells or both.

Muslims, in the early years of Islam, during the lifetime of the Prophet, had no special system; nor was such a system necessary, because the number of adherents to Islam was but small. Muslims were wont to decide upon a certain time for prayer, and to come together at that time. But when the Holy Prophet Muhammad migrated to Medina, the number of his followers began to grow. Then it was that it became necessary to devise some method of calling the faithful together. According to the traditions of Bukhári, it was at the suggestion of the Caliph Omar the Great that the present system was adopted. The words of the Call, it may be remarked in passing, are as authentic and intact as other institutions of Islam themselves.

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### (b) *Its Meanings.*

We know that man's instinct is to bow to his superiors, to show an unquestioning obedience to those who are placed in authority over him. That is why children obey their parents and pupils their teachers. Very rightly it is, therefore, that the Islamic call to prayers opens with the words "God is great," thus calling to witness the great eternal truth reposed in our nature. Then in order to save Muslims from the pitfalls into which the adherents of Christianity and others had fallen, the call impresses on us the fact that Muhammad is nothing more than an Apostle of God. Nations that preceded Islam had deified their prophets, not with the idea of doing them disservice or dishonour, but, as they thought, to do them honour in return for all the spiritual and worldly blessing which by their agency had been received.

Then the crier of the Islamic Call proceeds to announce to all those whom his voice can reach, the aim of his call. He tells them, in plain words, that he is calling them for prayers, not for play or enjoyment, nor yet for a business appointment, but for prayers which are a sure means to success, for no material success is ever gained without noble qualities as its bedrock.

### **The Christian and the Muslim Calls Compared.**

It is now a simple matter to institute a comparison between the two. If the Islamic Call is eloquent, articulate, the Christian is dumb. The bells say nothing. They are meaningless, conveying no message of any sort to the person who hears their sound. A simple noise is always a noise, and nothing else.

The Christian missionary in his hocus-pocus is ever too ready to bring forward the present-day ascendancy of Europe. We wonder what he has to say on the subject of church bells. In matters spiritual, European Christianity is still in its infancy.

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## MUHAMMAD IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

By PROFESSOR ABDULAHAD DAVOUD, B.D.

### I. PREFATORY REMARKS.

I PROPOSE, through this article and the ones which will follow it, to the best of my ability and by the help and grace of Allah

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to show that the doctrine of Islam concerning the Deity and the last great messenger of Allah is perfectly true and conforms to the teachings of the Bible.

I shall devote the present article to discussing the first point, and in a few other papers I shall attempt to show that Muhammad is the real object of the Covenant and in him, and him alone, are actually and literally fulfilled all the prophecies in the Old Testament.

I wish to make it quite clear that the views set out in this article and those which will follow it are quite personal, and that I am alone responsible for my personal and unborrowed researches in the Hebrew Sacred Scriptures. I do not, however, assume an authoritative attitude in expounding the teachings of Islam.

I have not the slightest intention nor desire to hurt the religious feelings of Christian friends. I love Christ, Moses and Abraham, as I do Muhammad and all other holy prophets of God.<sup>1</sup>

My writings are not intended to raise a bitter and therefore useless dispute with the Churches, but only invite them to a pleasant and friendly investigation of this all-important question with a spirit of love and impartiality. If the Christians desist from their vain attempt of defining the essence of the Supreme Being, and confess His absolute Oneness, then a union between them and the Muslims is not only probable but extremely possible. For once the unity of God is accepted and acknowledged, the other points of difference between the two faiths can more easily be settled. I shall be only too pleased to answer the difficulties or questions of the readers of the *Islamic Review*, which can be addressed to me care of the Editor.

### II. ALLAH AND HIS ATTRIBUTES.

There are two fundamental points between Islam and Christianity which, for the sake of the truth and the peace

<sup>1</sup> Qur-án, iii. 83. "Say : We believe in Allah and what has been revealed to us and what was revealed to Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the tribes, and what was given to Moses and Jesus and to the Prophets from their Lord; we do not make any distinction between any of them, and to Him do we submit."

of the world, deserved a very serious and deep investigation. As these two religions claim their origin from one and the same source, it would follow that no important point of controversy between them should be allowed to exist. Both these great religions believe in the existence of the Deity and in the covenant made between God and the Prophet Abraham. On these two principal points a thoroughly conscientious and final agreement must be arrived at between the intelligent adherents of the two Faiths. Are we poor and ignorant mortals to believe in and worship one God, or are we to believe in and fear a plurality of Gods? Which of the two, Christ or Muhammad, is the object of the Divine Covenant? These two questions must be answered once for all.

It would be a mere waste of time here to refute those who ignorantly or maliciously suppose the Allah of Islam to be different from the true God and only a fictitious deity of Muhammad's own creation. If the Christian priests and theologians knew their Scriptures in the original Hebrew instead of in translations as the Muslims read their Qur-án in its Arabic text, they would clearly see that Allah is the same ancient Semitic name of the Supreme Being who revealed and spoke to Adam and all the prophets.

Allah is the only self-existing, knowing powerful Being. He encompasses, fills every space, being and thing; and is the source of all life, knowledge and force. Allah is the unique Creator, Regulator and Ruler of the universe. He is absolutely One. The essence, the person and nature of Allah are absolutely beyond human comprehension, and therefore any attempt to define His essence is not only futile but even dangerous to our spiritual welfare and faith; for it will certainly lead us into error.

The trinitarian branch of the Christian Church, for about seventeen centuries, has exhausted all the brains of her saints and philosophers to define the Essence and the Person of the Deity; and what have they invented? All that which Athanasius, Augustines and Aquinases have imposed upon the Christians "under the pain of eternal damnation"—to believe in a God who is "the third of three"! Allah, in His Holy Qur-án, condemns this belief in these solemn words:—

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"They are certainly unbelievers, who say God is the third of three, for there is no God but the one God; and if they refrain not from what they say, a painful chastisement shall surely be inflicted on such of them as are unbelievers" (Qur-án, V. 73).

The reason why the orthodox Muslim scholars have always refrained from defining God's Essence is because His Essence transcends all attributes in which it could only be defined. Allah has many names which in reality are only adjectives derived from His essence through its various manifestations in the universe which He alone has formed. We call Allah by the appellations Almighty, Eternal, Omnipresent, Omniscient, Merciful, and so forth, because we conceive the eternity, omnipresence, universal knowledge, mercifulness, as emanating from His essence, and belonging to Him alone and absolutely. He is alone the infinitely Knowing, Powerful, Living, Holy, Beautiful, Good, Loving, Glorious, Terrible, Avenger, because it is from Him alone that emanate and flow the qualities of knowledge, power, life, holiness, beauty and the rest. God has no attributes in the sense we understand them. With us an attribute or a property is common to many individuals of a species, but what is God's is His alone, and there is none other to share it with Him. When we say, "Solomon is wise, powerful, just and beautiful," we do not ascribe exclusively to him all wisdom, power, justice and beauty. We only mean to say that he is relatively wise as compared with others of his species, and that wisdom too is relatively his attribute in common with the individuals belonging to his class.

To make it more clear, a divine attribute is an emanation of God, and therefore an activity. Now every divine action is nothing more or less than a creation.

It is also to be admitted that the divine attributes, inasmuch as they are emanations, posit time and a beginning; consequently when Allah said *Kun fakána*—i.e. "Be, and it became"—or He uttered, pronounced His word in time and in the beginning of the creation. This is what the Sūfees term '*aql-kull*, or universal intelligence, as the emanation of the '*aql awwal*, namely, the "first intelligence." Then the *nafs-kull*,

or the "universal soul" that was the first to hear and obey this divine order, emanated from the "first soul" and transformed the universe. Of course, these mystic views of the Sūfees are not to be considered as dogmas of Islam; and if we deeply penetrate into these occult doctrines, we may involuntarily be led into Pantheism which is destructive of a practical religion.

This reasoning would lead us to conclude that each act of God displays a divine emanation as His manifestation and particular attribute, but it is *not* His Essence or Being. God is Creator, because He created in the beginning of time, and always creates. God spoke in the beginning of time just as He speaks in His own way always. But as His creation is not eternal or a divine person, so His Word cannot be considered eternal and a divine Person. The Christians proceed further, and make the Creator a divine father, and His Word a divine son; and also, because He breathed life into His creatures, He is surnamed a divine Spirit, forgetting that logically He could not be father before creation, nor "son" before He spoke, and neither "Holy Ghost" before He gave life. I can conceive the attributes of God through His works and manifestations *a posteriori*, but of His eternal and *a priori* attributes I possess no conception whatever, nor do I imagine any human intelligence to be able to comprehend the nature of an eternal attribute and its relationship to the essence of God. In fact, God has not revealed to us the nature of His Being in the Holy Scriptures nor in the human intellect.

The attributes of God are not to be considered as distinct and separate divine entities or personalities, otherwise we shall have, not one trinity of persons in the Godhead, but several dozen of trinities. An attribute until it actually emanates from its subject has no existence. We cannot qualify the subject by a particular attribute before that attribute has actually proceeded from it and is seen. Hence we say "God is Good" when we enjoy His good and kind action; but we cannot describe Him—properly speaking—as "God is Goodness," because goodness is not God, but His action and work. It is for this reason that the Qur-án always attributes to Allah the adjectival appellations, such as the Wise, the Knowing, the Merciful, but never with such descriptions as "God is love,

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knowledge, word," and so forth; for love is the action of the lover and the lover himself, just as knowledge or word is the action of the knowing person and not himself.

I particularly insist on this point because of the error into which have fallen those who maintain the eternity and distinct personality of certain attributes of God. The Verb or the Word of God has been held to be a distinct person of the Deity; whereas the word of God can have no other signification than an expression of His Knowledge and Will. The Qur-án, too, is called "the word of God," and some early Muslim doctors of law asserted that it was eternal and uncreated. The same appellation is also given to Jesus Christ in the Qur-án—*Kalimatun minho*, i.e. "the Word from Him" (iii. 44). But it would be very unreligious to assert that the Word or Logos of God is a distinct person, and that it assumed flesh and became incarnate in the shape of a man of Nazareth or in the form of a book, the former called "the Christ" and the latter "the Qur-án"!

To sum up this subject, I insistently declare that the Word or any other imaginable attribute of God, not only is it not a distinct divine entity or individuality, but also it could have no actual (*in actu*) existence prior to the beginning of time and creation.

The first verse with which St. John's Gospel commences was often refuted by the early Unitarian writers, who rendered its true reading as follows: "In the beginning was the Word; and the Word was with God; and the Word was God's."

It will be noticed that the Greek form of the genitive case "Theou," i.e. "God's" <sup>1</sup> was corrupted into "Theos"; that is,

<sup>1</sup> Concerning the Logos, ever since the second century a very fierce controversy about it arose among the "Fathers" of the Church, especially in the East, and it continued until the Unitarians were utterly crushed and their literature destroyed. To-day, unfortunately, there remains hardly any portion *intact* or an unaltered fragment from the "Gospels" and "Commentaries" as well as the controversial writings belonging to the Unitarians, except what has been quoted from them in the writings of their opponents, such as the learned Greek Patriarch Photius and those before him.

Among the "Fathers" of the Eastern Christians, one of the most distinguished is St. Ephraim the Syrian. He is the author of many works, chiefly of a commentary on the Bible which is published both in Syriac and in Latin, which latter edition I had carefully read in Rome. He has also homilies, dissertations called "mâdrâshi" and

“God,” in the nominative form of the name! It is also to be observed that the clause “In the beginning was the word” expressly indicates the origin of the word which *was not before the beginning!* By the “word of God” is not meant a separate and distinct substance, coeval and co-existent with the Almighty, but an expression and proclamation of His knowledge and will when He uttered the word *Kun*, namely, “Be.” When God said *Kun* for the first time, the worlds became; when He said *Kun*, the Qur-án was created and written on the “*Lawh*” or “Table”; and when He pronounced the word “Be,” Jesus was created in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary; and so on—whenever He wills to create, His order “Be” is sufficient.

The Christian auspiciatory formula: “In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,” does not even mention the name of God! And this is the Christian God!

“contra Haeretici,” etc. Then there is a famous Syrian, author Bār Dīsān (generally written Bardisanes) who flourished in the latter end of the second and the first of the third century A.D. From the writings of Bār Dīsān nothing in the Syriac is extant except what Ephraim, Jacob of Nesibin and other Nestorians and Jacobites have quoted for refutation, and except what most of the Greek Fathers employed in their own language. Bār Dīsān maintained that Jesus Christ was the seat of the temple of the Word of God, but both he and the Word were created. St. Ephraim, in combating the “heresy” of Bār Dīsān, says:—

(Syriac):

“Wai lakh O, dovya at Bār Dīsān  
 Dagreit l'Milta eithrov d'Allāhā.  
 Bram kthabha la kthabh d'akh hākhān  
 Illa d'Miltha eithov Allāhā.”

(Arabic):

“Wailu 'l-laka yá anta' s-Safíl Bár Díshán  
 Li-anna fara'aita kána 'l-kalámo li 'l-Láhi  
 Lá-kina 'l-Kitábo má Kataba Kazá  
 Illa 'l-Kalámo Kána 'l-Láh.”

(English translation):

“Woe unto thee O miserable Bár Díshán,  
 That thou didst read the “Word was God's”!  
 But the Book [Gospel] did not write likewise,  
 Except that “the Word was God.”

Almost in all the controversies on the Logos the Unitarians are “branded” with the heresy of denying the eternity and divine personality of it by having “corrupted” the Gospel of John, etc. These imputations were returned to the Trinitarians by the true Nasára—Unitarians. So one can deduct from the patristic literature that the Trinitarians were always reproached with having corrupted the Scriptures.

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The Nestorian and Jacobite formula, which consists of ten syllables exactly like the Muslim "Bismillahi," is thus to be transliterated: Bshim Abhā wō-Bhrā ou-Ruhā d-Qudshā, which has the same meaning as that contained in all other Christian formulas. The Qur-ánic formula, on the other hand, which expresses the foundation of the Islamic truth is a great contrast to the Trinitarians' formula: Bismilláhi 'r-Rahmáni 'r-Rahím; that is: "In the name of the most Merciful and Compassionate Allah."

This Christian Trinity—inasmuch as it admits a plurality of persons in the Deity, attributes distinct personal properties to each person; and makes use of family names similar to those in the pagan mythology—cannot be accepted as a true conception of the Deity. Allah is neither the father of a son nor the son of a father. He has no mother, nor is He self-made. The belief in "God the Father and God the Son and God the Holy Ghost" is a flagrant denial of the unity of God, and an audacious confession in three imperfect beings who, unitedly or separately, cannot be the true God.

Mathematics as a positive science teaches us that a unit is no more nor less than one; that one is never equal to one plus one plus one; in other words, one cannot be equal to three, because one is the third of the three. In the same way, one is not equal to a third. And *vice versa*, three are not equal to one, nor can a third be equal to a unit. The unit is the basis of all numbers, and a standard for the measurements and weights of all dimensions, distances, quantities and time. In fact, all numbers are aggregates of the unit 1. Ten is an aggregate of so many equal units of the same kind.

Those who maintain the unity of God in the trinity of persons tell us that "each person is omnipotent, omnipresent, eternal and perfect God; yet there are not three omnipotent, omnipresent, eternal and perfect Gods, but one omnipotent . . . God!" If there is no sophistry in the above reasoning, then we shall present this "mystery" of the churches by an equation:—

1 God = 1 God + 1 God + 1 God; therefore: 1 God = 3 Gods. In the first place, one god cannot equal three gods, but only

one of them. Secondly, since you admit each person to be perfect God like His two associates, your conclusion that  $1 + 1 + 1 = 1$  is not mathematical, but an absurdity!

You are either too arrogant when you attempt to prove that three units equal one unit; or too cowardly to admit that three ones equal three ones. In the former case you can never prove a wrong solution of a problem by a false process; and in the second you have not the courage to confess your belief in three gods.

Besides, we all—Muslims and Christians—believe that God is Omnipresent, that He fills and encompasses every space and particle. Is it conceivable that all the three persons of the Deity at the same time and separately encompass the universe, or is it only one of them at the time? To say “the Deity does this” would be no answer at all. For Deity is not God, but the state of being God, and therefore a quality. Godhead is the quality of *one* God; it is not susceptible of plurality nor of diminution. There are no godheads but one Godhead, which is the attribute of one God alone.

Then we are told that each person of the trinity has some particular attributes which are not proper to the other two. And these attributes indicate—according to human reasoning and language—priority and posteriority among them. The Father always holds the first rank, and is prior to the Son. The Holy Ghost is not only posterior as the third in the order of counting but even inferior to those from whom he proceeds. Would it not be considered a sin of heresy if the names of the three persons were conversely repeated? Will not the signing of the cross upon the countenance or over the elements of the Eucharist be considered impious by the Churches if the formula be reversed thus: “In the name of the Holy Ghost, and of the Son, and of the Father”? For if they are absolutely equal and coeval, the order of precedence need not be so scrupulously observed.

The fact is that the Popes and the General Councils have always condemned the Sabellian doctrine which maintained that God is one but that He manifested Himself as the Father or as the Son or as the Holy Spirit, being always one and the

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same person. Of course, the religion of Islam does not endorse or sanction the Sabelian views. God manifested His *Jemāl* or beauty in Christ, His *jelāl* or glory and majesty in Muhammad, and His wisdom in Solomon, and so on in many other objects of Nature, but none of those prophets is any more God than the vast ocean or the majestic sky.

The truth is that there is no mathematical exactitude, no absolute equality between the three persons of the Trinity. If the Father were in every respect equal to the Son or the Holy Spirit, as the unit 1 is positively equal to another figure 1, then there would necessarily be *only one* person of God and not three, because a unit is not a fragment or fraction nor a multiple of itself. The very difference and relationship that is admitted to exist between the persons of the Trinity leaves no shadow of doubt that they are neither equal to each other nor are they to be identified with one another. The Father begets and is not begotten; the Son is begotten and not a father; the Holy Ghost is the issue of the other two persons; the first person is described as creator and destroyer; the second as saviour or redeemer, and the third as life-giver. Consequently none of the three is *alone* the Creator, the Redeemer and the Life-giver. Then we are told that the second person is the Word of the first Person, becomes man and is sacrificed on the cross to satisfy the justice of his father, and that his incarnation and resurrection are operated and accomplished by the third person.

In conclusion, I must remind Christians that unless they believe in the absolute unity of God, and renounce the belief in the three persons, they are certainly unbelievers in the true God. Strictly speaking, Christians are polytheists, only with this exception, that the gods of the heathen are false and imaginary, whereas the three gods of the Churches have a distinct character, of whom the Father—as another epithet for Creator—is the One true God, but the son is only a prophet and servant of God, and the third person one of the innumerable holy spirits in the service of the Almighty God.

In the Old Testament, God is called Father because of His being a loving creator and protector, but as the Churches abused this name, the Qur-án has justly refrained from using it.

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The Old Testament and the Qur-án condemn the doctrine of three persons in God; the New Testament does not expressly hold or defend it, but even if it contains hints and traces concerning the Trinity, it is no authority at all, because it was neither seen nor written by Christ himself, nor in the language he spoke, nor did it exist in its present form and contents for—at least—the first two centuries after him.

It might with advantage be added that in the East the Unitarian Christians always combated and protested against the Trinitarians, and that when they beheld the utter destruction of the “Fourth Beast” by the Great Messenger of Allah, they accepted and followed him. The Devil, who spoke through the mouth of the serpent to Eve, uttered blasphemies against the Most High through the mouth of the “Little Horn” which sprang up among the “Ten Horns” upon the head of the “Fourth Beast” (Dan. viii.), was none other than Constantine the Great, who officially and violently proclaimed the Nicene Creed.<sup>1</sup> But, as shown in a previous article,<sup>2</sup> in the *Islamic Review* by me, Muhammad has destroyed the “Iblis” or the Devil from the Promised Land for ever, by establishing Islam there as the religion of the one true God.

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### THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE

By R. LISSAN

#### ORIGIN.

THE three sacraments that represent the perfect Christian have been dealt with, leaving four, namely, Penance, Extreme Unction, Matrimony, and Holy Orders. The first two are for the purpose of repairing faults and pitfalls.

The sacrament of penance may be divided into two parts, the confessional, and the means of securing absolution; but before dealing with the Christian aspect a brief account of its origin and sources is necessary.

The earliest historical references to it are found in Assyria

<sup>1</sup> In a future article on “Muhammad in the Old Testament” this point will be discussed.—A.D.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Islamic Review*, October, 1926: “Why the Devil is called Iblis in the Qur-án.”

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and Egypt. In Assyria, confession was understood as the acknowledgment of sin, or of wrongdoing on the part of one who felt himself out of favour with the Deity whom he worshipped, or in danger of it. The sin might affect a fellow-man, or be an offence against religious justice or morality for which the Deity, jealous with regard to the due observance of right, exacted a penalty and inflicted punishment. This moral or religious aspect of sin, however, was probably a late development, the feeling of wrongdoing having been originally purely ritual—a failure to perform sacrifice or worship, or a defect in the performance or offering. Humiliation was evidently regarded as being acceptable to the Deity, and acknowledgment of wrongdoing paved the way to forgiveness . . . with the Babylonians, the feeling that the Deity might be displeased by possible wrongdoing probably originated with the Sumerians. The celebrant had, in particular, to be ritually clean. For this reason sin was originally the transgression of ritual laws, and appears as such in Babylonian religious literature (Hastings, *Encyclo-pedia*, "Confession," p. 825).

If we turn our attention to the Egyptian confession, we find things somewhat different; they had nothing of the deep sense of contrition and sense of the guiltiness of sin, characteristic of the Hebrew and Christian religions, but had a clear and accurate perception of right and wrong, though, apparently, little idea of repentance or penitential elements, of which there is no trace in Egyptian literature. Their view consisted in the repudiation of sin. In the *Book of the Dead*, chap. 125 (date 1580-1350 B.C.) is found what is called the Negative Confession, which may go back to the beginnings of the Egyptian Kingdom (4500 B.C.).

Coming to more recent times, the Jewish religion is found to have had penance and confession as part of its faith, which expected an admission from the penitent, whether penalty was to follow or not. In Genesis, the questions addressed to Adam and Cain were for the purpose of extracting a confession (cf. Gen. iii. 9, and iv. 9). Jacob confesses unworthiness in Gen. xxxii. 10, and David confesses sinning in 2 Sam. xii. 13.

On the Day of Atonement, the high-priest is said to have

confessed three times. This day retained its expiatory power after the destruction of the Temple. It expiates sin against God, but not man (Hastings, *Encyc.*, "Confession," p. 829). The Scriptures repeatedly prescribe confession of sins as a means to expiation and atonement. "It shall be that when he is guilty of any one of these things, he shall confess that he hath sinned in that thing" (Lev. v. 5). The effect of confession is remission. "And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the Lord. And Nathan said unto David, The Lord hath put away thy sin: thou shalt not die" (2 Sam. xii. 13). See also Job xxxiii. 27; Jer. iii. 11; Hos. xiv. 2.

Confession may be individual—that of a person repenting backsliding—or it may be national, when the people at large humble themselves before God. As examples of the former may be cited the confession of Cain (Gen. iv. 13), Jacob (Gen. xxxii. 9), David (2 Sam. xxiv. 10, Psa. xli. 4 and lxxix. 5), and of the later confession of the Israelites in the wilderness (Num. xiv. 40), in the dispersion (Lev. xxvi. 46), etc. National confessions are sometimes made through national representatives, as by Moses, after the Israelites worshipped the golden calf (Exod. xxxii. 31), by the high-priest on the Day of Atonement (Lev. xvi. 21; Ezra ix. 6, 7, 15). In rabbinical literature, repentance is likened to a door, which, if man opens only as much as the eye of a needle, God opens as wide as a gateway, for whoso is willing to cleanse himself is assisted from above, and confession may be said to be the opening wedge on which repentance turns (*Jewish Cyclopedia*, "Confession," p. 217).

The common formulas for confession of sins, in the Christian Church, begin in the main exactly like those of the Synagogue. The conclusion is that they go back to pre-Talmudic times. The closing words of the prayer of the Episcopal Church, "We have left undone those things that we ought to have done, and done those things we ought not to have done," are nearly identical with the closing words of the confession on the Day of Atonement, "O God of forgiveness, forgive us, pardon us, grant us remission for the violation of mandatory and for the violation of prohibitive precepts, for sins known or unknown to us." The mercy of God, the leading feature of the whole religious

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system of the Hebrews, made the wide gulf between them and all heathen religions perfectly discernible. Deeply the Israelites felt the great and infinite superiority of their religion and their God, for theirs was a merciful and sin-forgiving God. Penance implies the breaking of bread to the hungry, the clothing of the naked and the harbouring of the homeless—then shall his (supplicant) healing prosper; by mercy to the poor he shall cast away his own guilt, and by love and faithfulness make atonement for his iniquities (Doellinger, *Gentile and Jew*, vol. ii. p. 388).

### PENANCE IN CHRISTIANITY.

The aspect of penance or confessional in the Christian Church became more extended in scope than that in use in non-Christian faiths and gave it considerable powers. According to the Catholic ideas, Jesus bestowed on his disciples, without any restrictions, authority to forgive sins. Matthew xvi. 19, xviii. 18, and John xx. 21-23 are taken as leaving no doubt on the point that the Church has power to forgive all manner of sins. Certain sins, such as idolatry, homicide, adultery, etc., were considered so egregious that they were punished by perpetual excommunication and were left to the conscience of the sinner and God Himself; but forgiveness was everywhere granted to sinners who had obtained the intercession of the martyrs. But as time went on the Roman Church modified the rigours and Pope Cornelius (A.D. 251-253) extended the scope of forgiveness and reconciliation was denied only to those that had deferred asking for it until at the point of death.

Public penance, which was necessary for the readmission of the sinner into the Christian community, was preceded by a confession, the nature of the practices varying. According to Tertullian, they consisted in prayer, fasting, prostrations at the feet of the priests of the Church, dressing in sackcloth and rags, lying in ashes and using the plainest food and drink. Public confession in the West was suppressed by ordinance of Pope Leo I (A.D. 461) but public penance maintained. From time to time various Christian Fathers enunciated emphatically—amongst them being the notorious St. Cyril of Alexandria (A.D. 447), who was responsible for the murder of

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Hypatia—that the Church of God has power to forgive all sins. When the system of public penance passed away, came the use of what was known as the Penitential Books, the nucleus of which was the canon laid down by councils and bishops, consisting of regulations and decisions to guide confessors in the practice and administration of penance.

The three acts of the penitent are contrition, confession and satisfaction, out of which confession is considered by Catholics as being of divine origin. They base their claim on St. John xx. 22. Augustine, in supporting Church claims, says, in regard to the idea of confessing to God alone: "Was it for nothing that the keys were given to the Church?" (Patrologia Latina, 39, 1711).

### PENANCE AS AN INSTRUMENT OF POWER IN THE HANDS OF THE CHURCH.

As showing the enormous power which the principle placed in the hands of the priests, and which was used unscrupulously in the affairs of individuals and states, Milman in his *History of Latin Christianity*, vol. ix. p. 5, says: "In every kingdom of Europe the clergy form one of the estates, balance or blindly lead the nobles, and this, too, not merely as churchmen and enrolled in the service of God. They enjoy an acknowledged pre-eminence in the administration of temporal affairs.

"To this recognized intellectual superiority arising out of the power of selecting the recruits for their army according to their mental stature, their sole possession of the discipline necessary to train such men for their loftier position, and the right of choosing, as it were, their officers out of the chosen few, must be added their spiritual authority, their indefeasible power of pre-declaring the eternal destiny of every living layman. To doubt the existence of that eternal destiny was now an effort of daring as rare as it was abhorrent to the common sense of man. Those who had no religion had superstition; those who believed not, trembled and were silent; the speculative unbeliever, if there were such, shrouded himself in secrecy from mankind, even from himself; the unuttered lawless thought lay deep in his own heart. Those who openly doubted the unlimited power of the clergy to absolve were

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sects, outcasts of society, proscribed not only by the detestation of the clergy, but by the popular hatred. The keys of heaven and hell were absolutely in the hands of the priesthood —even more, in this life they were not without influence. In the events of war, in the distribution of earthly misery or blessing, abundance or famine, health or pestilence, they were the intercessors with the saints, as the saints were intercessors with Heaven. They were vested with a kind of omniscience. Confession, since the decree of the Lateran Council under Pope Innocent III, a universal, obligatory, indispensable duty, laid open the whole heart of everyone, from the emperor to the peasant, before the priesthood; the entire moral being of man, undistinguishable from his religious being, was under their supervision and control, asserted on one side and acknowledged on the other. No act was beyond their cognizance, no act, hardly any thought, was secret. They were at once a government and a police, to which everyone was bound to inform against himself, to be the agent of the most rigid self-deletion, to endure the closest scrutiny, to be denied the least evasion or equivocation, to be submitted to the moral tortures of menaced, of dreaded damnation, if he concealed or disguised the truth to undergo the most crushing humiliating penance. . . . The body after death might repose in consecrated ground, with saints, or be cast out."

Lecky, in his *History of European Morals*, in speaking of excommunication, one of the instruments of the powers of the Church, which it used against recalcitrance or heretical views, says: "The excommunicated man was not only cut off from the Christian rites, he was severed from all intercourse with his former friends. No Christian, on pain of being himself excommunicated, might eat with him or speak with him. He must live alone, and be hated in this world and prepared for damnation in the next."

### SCANDALS OF THE CONFESSORIAL.

We now come to the scandals of the confessional. The first Council of Toledo in A.D. 398 forbids any familiarity between the virgins dedicated to God and their confessors. So constantly was "solicitation"—*solicitatio ad turpiae* as it was

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called—borne in mind that a priest addicted to it forfeited his jurisdiction. Savonarola declared that the Italian cities were full of these wolves in sheep's clothing. The curia gained financially because of the fines imposed. Up to this time confession had been conducted in the open, with the penitent at his knees or by his side, which gave ample opportunity for temptation. Gradually the confessinals were evolved where neither could see the other. The earliest allusion to them was in 1547, but they came into use slowly because of priestly opposition. A protracted dispute and struggle took place between the religious orders, the people, the Pope, and the Jesuits on the question of solicitation and confession and the punishment to be accorded to the offending priest. By degrees, soon after was evolved the *Moral Theology* of St. Alphonse Liguori, a comprehensive treatise on the confessional. The nature of confessional interrogation was much abused, and great scandals occurred.

Allied to the above-mentioned abuse of the confessional was another which was practised, namely, flagellation or scourging, which frequently provided an opportunity for gratification in brutal instincts.

The code of moral conduct in the Roman Catholic world is embodied in the *Moral Theology* of St. Alphonse Liguori. The low moral state of most Catholic countries is not seriously contested; the facts are too patent. Statisticians tell us that the criminality of the Catholic population of Great Britain is approximately four times greater than that of the heretics. All history, police records, recent statistics of crime and lawlessness, the pictures drawn by Catholic writers of life in these and former days among their co-religionists, prove the Latin Church to be a disastrous failure as a moral agent all over the world. In respect of homicide, dishonesty, untruthfulness, lawlessness and licentiousness the Church's adherents have an especially bad record. Liguori's works, with their minute analysis of filthy vice and crime, form a scathing commentary on the morality that was then, and before his time, prevalent in countries under the Church's influence; but the people could at least plead that they were no worse than a large number of their religious mentors. Depravity and piety went hand in

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hand; the moral sense of the world has steadily improved as the Church's influence has declined. Rome has only one valid test of morality—the good of the Church (Stutfield, *The Roman Mischief-Maker*, p. 191).

The cause or reason for this, according to Stutfield,<sup>1</sup> seems to be the multitude of excuses, qualifying words and limitations, exceptions, palliatives, conditions and casuistical side-propositions, which afford opportunities for the evasion of obvious duties, that black is made to look white and the effect of the teacher's preliminary admonitions towards virtue is practically cancelled (*op. cit.*). The issue of indulgences had probably some influence in blunting the moral sense, supplementing the knowledge that absolution would be received. To illustrate the pernicious effect of confession and absolution, a few quotations taken from Liguori are given below: "An oath, be it *ever* so valid, can be broken or relaxed for the good of the Church." "A man swearing with the mind of swearing, but without the intention of binding himself, is not bound to observe his oath"; the reason Liguori gives for this gem is that, if there is no intention of binding oneself, there is no true oath, and if no oath exists, there is no obligation of fulfilling that oath. "A prudent servant can, *according to his own judgment*, compensate himself by stealing from his master for his ill-remunerated labour" (Liguori, iii. 524). "A man promises marriage with an oath to a girl who is rich, beautiful and of good report, etc. If she loses her money, Liguori absolves him from his oath" (Liguori, iii. 180). "On the other hand, a promise to be true to a harlot is binding 'because according to the general rule' an oath ought to be fulfilled" (iii. 184). An adulteress can deny her adultery to her husband, and assert equivocally with an oath that she "did not break the bond of matrimony, which truly remains"! Also if she has been sacramentally confessed, the lady can affirm her innocence, because her crime was taken away by confession (iii. 159-162).

From the above it will be evident that if these are the results of the sacrament of penance and the accompaniments of the confessional, the moral condition of the Latin Church is not to be wondered at.

<sup>1</sup> Page 199.

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Now a few words on the morals of the clergy.

Pope Pius IV, on August 16, 1561, issued a Bull in the city of Seville and other cities in Spain, authorizing any woman who had any charge against her confessor to report the matter to the Inquisition. Limbouch, in his *History of the Inquisition*, vol. ii. pp. 78-79, says: "When the decree was published, so large a number of women went to the Palace of the Inquisitors, in Seville only, to make their discoveries of their most wicked confessors, that twenty secretaries, with as many Inquisitors, were not sufficient to take the depositions of the witnesses. The Lords Inquisitors, being thus overwhelmed with the multitude of affairs, assigned another thirty days for the witnesses; and when this was not sufficient, they were forced to appoint the same number a third and a fourth time."

### CONFESsION AND INDULGENCEs.

Confession was only introduced by "Ecclesiastical Law." For we know that Chrysostom says the following in regard to confession: "I entreat and beseech you to confess continually to God. For I do not bring thee into the theatre of thy fellow-servants, nor do I compel thee to uncover thy sins to men." Many quotations could be given to prove that whispered confession was altogether *unknown* in the Christian Church before the Decian persecution in A.D. 250.

Auricular confession in private was revived in the Church of England in 1838 by Dr. Pusey, and is held by Ritualists. Some defenders regard it as the toilet of the conscience. But Dr. Pusey himself said: "It is a sad sight to see Confessors giving their whole morning to their women devotees while they dismiss men and married women with, 'I am busy; go to someone else'" (Pusey, *Manual for Confessors*, p. 108). The feminine sex seem to have a proneness for confession, and this is an element of danger in the moral sense.

A candid and unbiased student cannot fail to see how it is that the Roman Church has fallen into evil days. The enforcement of celibacy and the imposition of the confessional and penance have warped the moral sense of the entire Roman communion. A great number of writers and works could be quoted to show the moral turpitude and

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sense of iniquity associated with the mediæval church from priest to pope (cf. J. McCabe, *Popes and Their Church*).

The next thing is to consider the indulgences and what they implied and stood for. Indulgences are a partial survival of the primitive discipline of penance; they are the remission of the penitential satisfaction due for pardoned sins, and are granted by spiritual authority for the performance of optional works of merit. Their history dates from the very beginning as far as the essential element is concerned, but they did not attain their final form until the eleventh century. In the early centuries this remission resulted in hastening the return of the sinner to ecclesiastical reunion; later, in the substitution of easier works of shorter duration for the required penances; and when penances ceased to be individually imposed, they would be remitted all the more readily and generously.

The characteristic feature of ancient public penitential discipline was the exclusion of the culprit, by way of satisfaction, either from ecclesiastical communion or at least from eucharistic communion. This exclusion was supplemented by penances under ecclesiastical control. But the Church always preserved the right to terminate this exclusion; the bishop who had judged the fault and given the sinner his penance could also decide when the penitent had made sufficient satisfaction. The principle is clearly stated by one of the most ancient penitential canons. As the system developed in the Penitential Books, we find that the most important part of the satisfaction is no longer the exclusion of the sinner from communion, but works of reparation, prayer, psalms, fasts, mortifications and alms. And this system developed gradually into the issue of indulgences in relation to the consecration of a church, the festival of a venerated saint, a pilgrimage or alms, to the upkeep of churches and abbeys. The history of indulgences, after this, is summed up in constantly increasing concessions, ever more easily obtained for the most varied acts of piety and charity, and by the end of the thirteenth century there were numerous ones for a year, for five years, and so on. The abuse commonly known as the "sale of indulgences" was a very real exploitation of the concessions of indulgences granted in return for almsgivings to the churches; and it must

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be remarked that this was always an abuse and never a legitimate custom.

A plenary indulgence is considered as wiping out the whole debt of the temporal punishment, a partial indulgence for a limited period. The Church could make out a draft on the merits of Christ and get the punishment cancelled. This is not an actual sale, but approaches very closely to it. Periodically a man gets a "plenary" indulgence or Porticulula day, *every time* he enters a church attached to a Franciscan friary and says a short prayer.

Are the indulgences sold? That they have been literally sold, one knows to have happened in the case of John XXIII. The condemnation of the Pope, however, reminds us that this is not in accordance with Catholic doctrine. Indulgences must NOT be sold. . . . Little wax figures of lambs—Agnus Dei's—are blessed by the Pope, enclosed in a sort of sling to be worn about the neck, and sold. . . . For the genuine article, which (Catholics assure you) you cannot get in heretical countries, go to Spain. Enter a Catholic repository or bookshop in Madrid and ask for a *bula*. "Yes, Señor, which *bula*?—de difuntos, de composicion, de carnes, or the other?"—meaning, Do you want a plenary indulgence for yourself, or one covering a dead friend, or a *bula* releasing you from the fasts of the Church, or one permitting you to keep with a safe conscience any illgotten property you may have? You want an indulgence-*bula*, you pay 75 centesimos (sixpence) and you get your change (MacCabe, *Popes and Their Church*, p. 139).

As far as penance and satisfaction go, the Islamic viewpoint is that there is no need for any mediator or go-between between the penitent and God. No specious or casuistical argument about the necessity for an interceder will hold water. The only object and result of the confessional, as such, is to give power, influence and unwarranted interference into the rights of the individual, mar the harmony between peoples and families, and constitute itself a source of the most serious moral danger, as the whole history of the Christian Church emphatically shows.

# EUROPE'S DEBT TO ISLAM

## EUROPE'S DEBT TO ISLAM<sup>1</sup>

(The Arabs in the Middle Ages, and their Influence on the Culture of Europe)

By DR. GUSTAV DIERCKS

(Translated from the German by 'Abdu 'l-Majid, M.A.)

(Continued from April-May number, p. 144.)

Now the question arises: What was the substitute which the Church offered to the world for all that which it had forbidden it, of which it had robbed and, through spoliation, deprived it? It gave the world the word of the Bible, the view of life of the Jews, which view had become stagnant on a far lower stage of Evolution than that of the Greeks. And this, again, had not even by its side the pure, moral, noble fundamental principles with the help of which Christianity appeared victorious on the stage of the world. The word of Holy Writ was regarded as infallible right down to the time of Galileo (1564-1642), and everything which was spoken against the Holy Word was tantamount to heresy; and it was punished more and more at times when the Church felt the ground underneath its feet shaky, when it saw the gradual disappearance of the authority of dogmas, and the veil of mysticism rent by the spirit of research and scepticism and emancipation from its inwardly decaying edifice. Instead of goading the mind of the people towards intellectual development of thought, the Church penned it, on the contrary, within very narrow boundaries, every transgression beyond which was nothing less than a sacrilegious crime against the sanctity of the Christian teachings; but even these had in a few centuries lost the spur of their original simplicity. It was hardly possible to recognize them under the confused heap of religious and dogmatical sophistries, which had been crammed into them. They had been secularized from the moment that they had been transformed into an institution of the State, called the State Church. And this fact is admitted even by the Fathers of the Church.

Now what must be the consequence, if a people in the

<sup>1</sup> Being the translation of *Die Araber im Mittelalter und ihr Einfluss auf die Kultur Europa's*, by Dr. Gustav Diercks, Leipzig, 2nd Edn., 1882, pp. 19-27.

blindness of their obedience, amid strife within the Church, and the battering of the adversary without, gave up each and every higher interest and allowed itself to degenerate insensibly into a kind of worship of idols—an idolatry which not only displayed many traces of the exalted cult of the Greeks, but also opened hundreds of doors for deceptions and cheating? In this connection, says Draper in his book *Intellectual Development of Europe*, vol. i. p. 310: "There is a solemnity in the truthful accusation which Faustus makes to Augustine: You have substituted your agape for the sacrifices of the pagans; for their idols your martyrs, whom you serve with the very same honours. You appease the shades of the dead with wine and feasts; you celebrate the solemn festivals of the Gentiles; their calends and their solstices; and as to their manners, those you have retained without any alteration. Nothing distinguishes you from the pagans except that you hold your assemblies apart from them."

The result was that the Christian people were enveloped in a complete moral degeneracy, that the Christian religion, wherever it went, checked mental progress and development and suppressed the already existing culture. The whole of its learning consisted in nothing else, but belief in the words of Holy Writ, which perhaps but one man out of three hundred could decipher; in belief in the healing and miraculous power of the decayed bones of the martyrs; in belief in the miracle-performing splinters of the cross of Christ, whose wood, they said, "possessed the property of growth and hence furnished an abundant supply for the demands of the pilgrims and an unfailing source of pecuniary profit to its possessors. In the course of subsequent years there was accumulated in the various Churches of Europe, from this particular relic, a sufficiency to have constructed many hundred crosses" (Draper, vol. i. p. 309, London, 1875).

Exaggerated miracles and superstition, a belief in the healing and miraculous powers of the decayed skeletons of martyrs, the splinters of the cross of Christ, and innumerable other fetishes represented the sum-total of what was offered to the people as a substitute for the learning and scholarship of the ancients. And one full, solid thousand years had to

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pass before Europe once more tried to scale the same height, which mankind had already reached, but from which it had been pushed back down into the deepest abyss of mental depravity.

Thanks to the diligence of the Catholic writers of the Middle Ages, it has long been the custom to impute all the depravity of those days to the encroachment and invasions of the barbarians, i.e. to the tribes set in motion by the widespread migration of the peoples!

Tacitus had already recognized an element of great importance in the Germanic races. This is shown by him in his writings on Germany. In these writings he tried hard to arrest the decline of the Roman State which found itself on the downhill road of an inward corruption by bringing the untainted, natural strength and the simple and unaffected customs of the Germans into marked comparison with those of the highly refined and polished Romans. He thus strove hard to rouse his countrymen to combat the peril of the poison which was decomposing the very vitals of the State, and exhorted them to return to that natural way of living to which they owed their greatness and which they could still see in the Germans of those days. But it is quite understandable that a single individual could never stay the progress of a corruption that had got its grip on millions. His endeavours were as useless as those of his predecessors. It was not the so-called barbarians, but the poisonous elements which the imperial Roman State organism had nourished in its body-politic, that brought about the collapse of the Empire. The decay of the Church hastened this process, and nothing was left for the barbarians to destroy. Tacitus had discerned that regeneration would result from an admixture of the German tribes, and history shows that he was not wrong.

If we were to consider the working of these ethnical elements, we could not afford to rely implicitly on the statements and evidences of writers contemporaneous with those battles of the Germans against the Romans and against the Greeks sent from Byzantium; for the writers referred to belonged to the party of the opponents and of the Church. But we can draw conclusions from all that they have stated, which they could not suppress, as to the nature of influences which these barbarians must have exerted on the people of Southern Europe.

Now we can see from what has been said that at the time of the beginning of the migration of the people the Roman power was as good as buried; that it existed only in name and could no longer put up resistance to the inrushing floods of the foreign barbarians. The Greeks who were sent from Byzantium, the mercenary soldiers and, later, the barbarians themselves who had settled down in Italy—these it was who constituted the defenders and pilots of Imperialism. We have already noticed that the Church had become completely secularized in those days and had begun to decay inwardly as well. As regards the culture of those days, we know how barbarous was the behaviour of the Christian Church; how in its fury for destruction it demolished all the treasures of the ancient age, save those which were not liable to the party strifes and quarrels which arose from dogmatic discussion and from the deplorable internal condition of things in Rome under the rule of the last West Roman Emperor and under the sovereignty of the Eastern Romans. That during the battles of West Rome against the wild barbarians many architectural monuments and treasures of art were subjected to spoliation and that these battles owing to the bitterness on both sides—for it was among the quarrelling, warring parties always a question of life and death—were gory and that they cost both sides many lives should not at all astonish us, for history gives ample proof that the Christians were in no way less barbarous than their opponents. The Greek commanders, Bellisar and Narses, did not fight; they only slaughtered. Even the rapid and varied succession of conquests of Rome by the barbarians did less harm than was caused by the extortions of the Emperors and later of the clergy or by the internecine battles of the capital.

In conclusion it must not, in the first place, be ignored that the barbarians when they invaded the Roman Empire found very little to destroy. On the contrary, it is established that, according to the nature of the Germanic races, they adapted themselves everywhere very quickly to the social conditions which had been in existence there from the days of yore. The high culture which they encountered was rapidly adopted by them. Further, it is common knowledge that the

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Germanic tribes when they settled down on the soil of the Roman Empire, or even before they did so, were in an extraordinary manner accessible to the Christian teaching. It is well known that even if most of them (the Franks making a particular exception) still adhered to the more intelligent Arian formula of faith, they all of them became the most zealous protectors of Christianity, and were the props and spreaders of its teachings. The Westgoths and the Franks were the more trustworthy protagonists and servants of the Church than the peoples of the Empire, e.g. the Italians.

Now let us see what they did.

By their invasion they roused the people of Italy from the stagnation in which they had been submerged. The barbarians, having mingled with the Italians, laid the foundations of new nationalities. Such an amalgam of peoples was brought about in all the European provinces of the Empire. Further, languages also combined themselves one with another. Classical Latin had practically died away; for the Latin of the Middle Ages had grammatically nothing more in common with the Latin of Cicero, of Virgil and of Cæsar, than the same family of words. For this reason Mediæval Latin resembled the Christian churches which had been shaped out of the pagan temples. Here also the antique was disfigured and desecrated. Along with the languages, many different concepts, many institutions, many customs had mingled, and the many cultures, which now developed everywhere, showed very clearly the variegated nature of elements. As bearers of culture next to the Franks it is principally the Goths and the Longobords (Lombards) and the Vandals that come into the purview of our consideration. And as such they can compare very favourably with the Italian peoples.

Notwithstanding their aversion to the foreign elements, Muraton and Traboschi are compelled to admit that the intellectual level attained by the above-mentioned people was higher than that prevailing anywhere in Italy at that time. Theodorich, the King of the Estgoths, was a ruler whose like Italy had not seen for a long time. He loved learning and art; he did all that he could to ameliorate their condition; he tried to attract the learned people to his Court; he built schools;

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in short, he took steps for the advancement of the arts of peace and for the uplift of his people; his successors, too, won distinction in the same way, so that a new culture seemed ready to shoot forth from the Court of Ravenna. Even if we could not or were not allowed to presume that the degree of civilization evinced by the different peoples in Italy after the advent of the German races was higher than that which had previously existed, and that the Goths too did not bring with them a very high scholarly nature, at least we are safe in asserting that under the rule of Theodoric, both the ruler and people were receptive of art and learning; that they cherished an interest for them and had great respect for the classical ancient age; that they tried to preserve all they could of it; that in their efforts also they showed religious tolerance and that they tried to save and respect the Catholic belief and its institutions. Under the rule of Theodoric, mankind began to come to life again and progress till the Greeks, sent from Byzantium, put an end to the Gothic Kingdom and nipped the noble endeavour in the bud and thrust the people back once more into the dark night of illiteracy from which, perhaps, they otherwise could have managed to liberate themselves.

The Longobards (Lombards) seemed to occupy an even higher pedestal of culture than that attained by the Goths. They brought with them much that was truly German which, after it had struck deep root, exerted a great influence on the future progress of Italy. They tried their best, according to their capacity, to work for knowledge. All the great men, with very few exceptions, who occupied prominent positions in the mental life and work of those days came from their rich people. And this fact proves to us that these people were more civilized than the whole of the rest of Europe. We find, further, that it was they who, at a later period, worked as the intermediaries of the mind of Emancipation. As torch-bearers of civilization, working hard to free themselves from every yoke and oppression, they were compelled to infuse fear and awe into the Church, which was hungering for power and was doing its utmost to suppress and to destroy them. The Church used the Franks and the faithful King Charlemagne, the so-

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called Great, as tools to achieve its end and in reward for his services gave him the imperial crown. The Franks had also a leaven of German origin; and Charlemagne himself played his part, too, towards improving the culture of Europe in accordance naturally with the views of Christianity and by destroying much of the Germanic heathen remains and sacred relics.

The vandals at last founded an empire in South Spain which by the writers of that period is described as flourishing. Just as prosperous and thriving was the empire which they created in Africa, and its culture was very significant. The Northerners succumbed too soon to the enervating climate of these territories and could not protect themselves against the influences which riches, collected by them in heaps, exerted on their morals.

With the above is connected the next important question, that is to say, who were the preservers of the few literary treasures of the ancient ages which have been handed down to us? The answer to this question till very recently was generally as follows: It was principally the monks who saved these precious, invaluable treasures and offered an asylum to them in their cloisters. But there is very little truth in it. For, firstly, the greater part of the treasures, as stated above, were destroyed before the migration of the different races had set in; and in those days monachism had not developed to such an extent, and had quite other tendencies, so that we cannot accept the statement that it was the monks who conceived the idea of giving shelter to the works of the ancient ages in their cells. Secondly, the monks appear in the early part of the Mediæval period, with the characteristics of fanatical annihilators, not as the preservers of the treasures of the pagan age. Thirdly, we find everywhere regulations which forbade priests and monks to read heretical—that is to say, the classical—books; and perhaps only later was an exception made, in the tenth century. At all times, the illiteracy of the monks remained as their characteristic, and even in the famous cloister of St. Gallen it once so happened that the whole of the chapter was ignorant of the art of reading. Fourthly, there are to be found in many of the catalogues of the books in various

libraries, and in many other decisive and definite dates in the history of culture, proofs to the fact that in the cloisters only very few literary products had been preserved.

In fine, we have now gained insight enough into the monachism of those days and into its history to be enabled to recognize the fact that, having regard to the excessive number of the cloisters and to their being found in all places, practically nothing was done by them for the preservation of classical works. At all events it is true that the number of orders that devoted themselves to the service of learning was minute in proportion to the total; and, further, that these few belong to the later part of the Middle Ages, and that learned monks, those genuinely and actually engaged in the service of learning, formed an amazingly small percentage of the millions of monks that were scattered all over Europe. To these few individuals might go the credit of having been the preservers and custodians of the classical works, in so far as they did not extend their activities to washing or removing the old parchment writings before writing over them interesting fabulous legends or similar products of the sickly Christian mind. Before them on the side of the Christians it was only the Byzantines in whose libraries the small remains of those immensely great treasures lay heaped up—treasures which were the products of the mind of the ancient Greeks and Romans. Further, credit may be given to the Germanic tribes who had settled down permanently in Southern Europe; but more than any other nation the Arabs were the preservers of the sciences. To the Arabs, therefore, we turn now. Their appearance in history synchronizes with a period when the Church was entering upon a condition of complete and inevitable decay. Like a powerful current, this new element made its way through the world and compelled the Church to collect itself in order to oppose its strength against the new, defiant, threatening enemy that had, with an impetuous ferocity, hurled itself onwards and imperilled the world-governance of the Church.

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**Friday Prayer and Sermon.**—At the London Muslim Prayer House  
—III, Campden Hill Road, Notting Hill Gate, London—every Friday  
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**Service, Sermon, and Lectures** every Sunday at the Mosque, Woking,  
at 3.15 p.m. Every Friday at 1 p.m.



THE IMAM READING HIS 'IDU'L-AZHA (1346 A.H.) ADDRESS

